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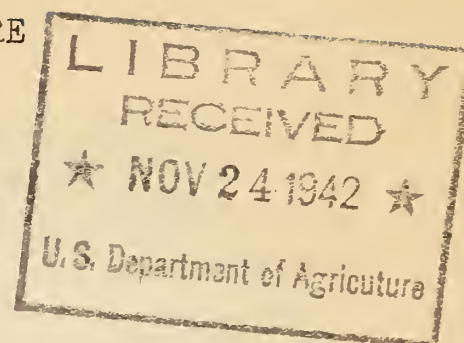
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FOOD IN THE PRESENT EMERGENCY



An address by Arthur C. Bartlett, Special Assistant to the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Administration, before the American Dietetic Association, Detroit, Michigan, October 21, 1942.

When a lifeboat crew leaves a sinking ship and strikes out for an unknown destination, a system of rationing is set up immediately. The boat may be well stocked with food and water - enough to give each man an ample diet for a week, perhaps, or a fair diet for as long as two weeks. But the castaways have no assurance that they will be picked up within one week, two weeks, or two months. So they prepare for the worst.

In a manner of speaking, we are in the same boat. Our food supply situation would be more favorable if we could depend on the war being over by January 1 or any time in the relatively near future. But this looks like a long war - and we must plan accordingly. We must pull in our belts for the duration - we must handle our food supplies in such a way as to get the maximum nourishment out of the foods that require the least labor to produce.

The pressure that is compelling us to change our diets is steadily increasing. Crop production this year will set a new high record, true, but as the months go by, shortages of manpower, transportation, and materials will make it more difficult to turn out the food we need. At the same time, the demands from our armed forces, our allies, and our civilians will increase. The solution of the problem here, as in other countries at war, will be to shift our diet toward the cheaper foods that we can produce most abundantly.

We may as well realize right now that our path leads to plainer living rather than to easier living. We must all eat more of what we need even if this means less of what we like. We must learn that we can fight as well on cabbage as on Brussels sprouts, as well on codfish as on oysters, as well on bread and butter as on French pastry, and as well on skim milk as on whole milk.

Adjusting to Present Food Supplies

In many cases we must use new foods - by-products, perhaps, of farm products manufactured for other war needs. This year, for instance, farmers have virtually doubled their production of soybeans and peanuts in order to produce the oil needed to replace oils formerly imported. After the oil is pressed out of these soybeans and peanuts, a highly nutritive residue is left - a protein, as you know, that rivals meat in food value. Yet we are using only a relatively small proportion of this food for human consumption. In the near

future much more of this food must be made available for use in our everyday diets. Mixed in breads and soups, or with cereals or meat products, these protein flours and grits can go a long way toward improving our national level of nutrition.

Housewives will be asked, too, to buy more foods in bulk. This will save badly needed tin for use in canning food to be sent to our men on the fighting fronts or to our allies. Sauerkraut, for instance, is now being put up in barrels. It won't be quite as handy, of course, for a housewife to handle kraut in the bulk. But each time she does, she will be definitely helping our war food effort.

There are now some undersupplies, and there will be more, in relation to the domestic demand. Our meat supplies, for instance, are at a record high, with production during the current fiscal year expected to total some 24 billion pounds. But the war needs of our Army and Navy, and those of the other United Nations, will take six and one-half billion pounds of the red meats - beef, pork, veal, lamb, and mutton. If each of us were eating the same quantity of meat we ate during the 10 years from 1930-39, there would be no need for any thought of meat rationing. That seventeen and one-half billion pounds would be plenty. But with more money to spend, we are eating more meat. And we would eat even more if it were available. So we must distribute the supply we have - call it rationing - so that each will have a fair share.

Take other foods. Some will be scarce for the duration, some will be scarce for varying periods between seasons, and some will be scarce when war's demands are unusually heavy. The purpose of rationing is to assure the fair distribution of these scarce foods, and there is sure to be rationing of many foods as the war goes on. The thought of impending rationing of some foods should not cause alarm. By planning our food purchasing and our menus, we shall be able to keep ourselves well fed.

It will call for more work and planning on the part of dietitians, nutritionists, and teachers. Yours is the task of planning menus, purchasing the food, and managing its preparation. Yours, too, is the task of teaching others the facts about our food situation and advising others on how to manage their home food supplies better. As a nation, we must become more and more nutrition conscious in the days ahead, we must plan our diets to utilize the food we will have available, and to best care for the needs of our people.

Food Rationing in Britain

Great Britain met this problem early in the war. It was a matter of urgent war necessity. Today, despite severe shortages, many of her people are eating more than they ever ate before - and working harder as a result. A huge subsidy on food accomplishes the purpose there. Food variety is very limited. But food costs are kept down to a level at which even the poorest may buy his rationed share.

In Britain, the requirements, in terms of vitamins and calories, were carefully worked out. Each sailor, each soldier, each man, woman, and

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child at home was taken into consideration. Each must be fed, officials knew, if Great Britain's war effort was to succeed. A riveter in a shipyard burns up more physical energy than a clerk. A child needs certain body-building foods which an adult can do without. These special needs were considered in the overall food plan.

Out of this careful planning grew a complete picture of the nutritive needs of the nation. These needs were then translated into milk, eggs, meat, and vegetables. That gave a national shopping list; a list that was complete, for the quantitative and qualitative needs of each inhabitant of the country had been carefully considered.

The best-fed person in Great Britain, we are told, is a sailor. He must be alert, keen-eyed, and ready at all times to do whatever heavy work is necessary on board ship. His food ration, accordingly, is boosted far above that of, say, a London office worker.

The second-best fed man is a worker in a heavy industry. The third best is not a man at all, but a child. To the children, Britain realizes, belongs the tomorrow for which we are fighting. If their bodies and minds are to be strong when that tomorrow arrives, they must have the proper food now, war or no war. Accordingly, then, children have priorities on certain types of food. A young child is allowed more eggs than is an adult. Citrus fruits and their juices are set aside for the children. Good food, as well as good care, are given school children, and younger children whose mothers are working in war plants.

When the British food rations were set up, it meant a drop in food consumption for some civilians. But there were millions of Britons who never had been able to afford as much food as the ration now allowed. So Britain's wartime food program, though it is a system of rationing the short supplies available, actually has enabled many persons to eat better than they did in peacetime.

Our own food problems differ in many respects from those of Britain. What works there is not necessarily destined for success in this country. Our own supplies are largely home-raised, while Britain must depend on imports for the bulk of her foods.

But I wonder if we might not find it profitable to tear at least one leaf from Britain's notebook - make certain that our own children and our underprivileged are furnished an adequate diet? Only by having each of us strong can our nation survive to carry out a just and equitable peace.

Public Feeding Program in the United States

This is the reason, in a few words, why we should continue, perhaps even expand, our public feeding programs. That is the reason many of you must take extra pains in planning your school, institutional, or hospital meals. That is the reason the Agricultural Marketing Administration is more certain than

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ever that the school lunch, school milk, and food stamp plans are just as urgently needed - perhaps more so - in wartime as they were in peace.

These programs were initiated partly as a system of disposing of farm surpluses, partly as building blocks in a long-range effort to improve the diets of our citizens. Surpluses now are little more than a memory. Indeed, perhaps it is a question whether or not we ever had any, for it is difficult to say a food is in surplus if millions of people are undernourished because of the lack of it. Let us hope we shall never again hear much about surpluses as long as there are hungry mouths to feed.

But though the surpluses are gone, except in a very limited and local sense, the need lingers on. Here is a case in point:

The principal of a school in the Middle West began paying more attention to the lunch-boxes of his pupils. He discovered that the children were actually being undernourished through bad choice of foods. There's not much latitude or room for variety in a lunch-box diet.

Some of the children were just not well enough fed to absorb any education. If the children were physically undernourished, the chances are that mental and moral growth was held back as much and perhaps even more than was their physical growth.

Well balanced lunches - a complete noon meal at school, reasoned this principal, were one answer.

Last January he succeeded in getting a school lunch program started in his school. At the weighing-in of the children at the beginning of the program, it was discovered that 25 percent of the pupils were at least 10 percent underweight. In June, after only a few months of participation in the lunch program, a weight check showed that only 11 percent were still 10 percent underweight. We fully realize that weight is only one criterion of nutritional status, but teachers report also a greatly improved classroom attitude, and less of what they described as "last-period fog."

These are results we can measure. And that's no isolated case. From every corner of the country reports have reached us of similar and even better results. Four million children received lunches under the program last year, with a peak of over 6 million in March, and we hope to see that number reach 9 million this year. Our children are still with us. Their young bodies need all the care we can give them. They must be strong when their turn comes to take over a share in the reorganization of a better peacetime world.

Some consider it illogical to continue public feeding programs at a time when food reserves are being stretched to meet war needs. The school lunch program, the school milk program, the food stamp plan - all these would be abolished. You as nutritionists probably know much better than I how dangerous this would be. You know that in time of stress, it is essential that everyone receive an adequate diet. Only in that way can we hope to ensure

ourselves against epidemics of disease and assure ourselves the highest volume of war production. A poorly-fed person is easy prey for sickness. An under-nourished man will build very few planes, tanks, or guns.

Back in the days when surpluses were large and frightening, our Food Stamp Plan was set up. It was designed to encourage the use of foods which were in the greatest abundance, and to add to the nutrition of families who could not otherwise afford enough food. Dependent children, the aged, the unemployed, and the blind, crippled or ill unemployables are the principal groups it helps.

Most of you, I am sure, are familiar with how it works: Families or individuals certified by welfare officials as being needy are given the opportunity to buy orange stamps which can be exchanged in cooperating food stores at face value. These orange stamps are just like cash; they will buy any food in the store. There's no profit to the needy person yet, he has just transformed his dollars into stamps, which have the same value. The bonus comes in the form of blue stamps. With each dollar's worth of orange stamps, the blue stamps - usually 50 cents' worth, are given. These blue stamps can be exchanged for certain foods which are on the blue stamp list. The Government reimburses the grocer for the cost of the blue stamp foods.

The blue stamp list has been a list of surpluses. Even now the items on the list are those which are most nearly in abundance, and which should be moved to encourage a continued high production, which we shall need for war purposes. Right now, for instance, wheat and corn products are the main items on the list. Others include fresh apples, fresh vegetables, potatoes, and dry edible beans.

But might it not be possible to use such a stamp plan mechanism in a broader way? Some rationed foods might be put on a stamp list, not because they need to be moved from the farm or market place, but to put them within the reach of low-income people. This would be extending the sharing principle, making it possible for even the low-income group to build themselves up nutritionally to a point where they could be of the maximum value to the war effort. Then these people would not only be allowed to buy their share, as far as their ration books are concerned; they would also be able to buy their share, as far as their pocketbooks are concerned.

Planning Adequate Diets for All

As our need for a better national health becomes more and more pressing, it would be utterly illogical to deny adequate diets to any of our population. With war work taking the time of more and more mothers, the need for well-organized school lunch programs grows. With rising food costs, we must be more than ever on guard to make certain that every American receives the food he needs.

Our soldiers and war workers come first, of course. Of the soldiers' diets we need have no fear. Eating more than a ton of food a year - far

more than he did in civilian life - each of our soldiers and sailors is adequately cared for. To care for our workers and our women and children on the home front is our job - yours and mine. To do this job successfully is going to demand more and more planning from each of us. We must plan our purchases and our menus to conform to the available food supplies.

One way is to watch for the Victory Food Specials. This program is designed to point out the foods that need to be consumed in maximum quantities at a particular time. A "special" may be designated to prevent waste, to help keep production up, or to relieve the buying pressure on foods that are scarce. It is not a price support program but a program of food management. What we buy and eat today helps to determine what we will have to eat tomorrow, and what will be available to send to our fighting men and to our allies.

We are proud - very proud - of the vast flood of food going to our own soldiers and to our allies. It is going to Alaska, Australia, Great Britain, Trinidad, Egypt, Russia, New Zealand, Labrador, Iceland, India, Madagascar, China, Bermuda, and Syria. Our food went into battle before our soldiers did. It is now fighting on more fronts than are the armies of any one single nation.

This is bound to affect our home food supplies. War's demands now take 60 percent of our American cheese production. A fourth of all our meats must go to our armed forces and to the other United Nations. A third of our production of canned fruits and vegetables, about the same proportion of our dried fruits, and 30 to 40 percent of our dried beans and peas must be set aside for war uses. A full 60 to 85 percent of our canned fish must be taken from the domestic market, along with 45 percent of the dried skim milk, 70 percent of the dried whole milk, and 40 percent of the evaporated milk.

Fortunately, we have this food - but it's not by accident. Farmers began tooling up for war two years ago - long before most industry. It was at this time that Secretary Wickard asked them to increase production. When that increase was asked, prices were low - too low to arouse much interest in putting in 12 to 16 hours a day to produce more. But the Secretary asked for more food - told the farmers it would be needed - and they produced more. Our farmers have done a splendid job.

So we will have enough food. To see that it is fully utilized is our responsibility. By having a clear understanding of the problems involved, by working out answers to those problems, and by making everyday use of the conclusions, you as experienced dietitians and nutritionists, can play a very large and tremendously important part in the management of our wartime food supplies. It is to the membership of this and similar associations that the country must look for leadership in this time when food habit adjustments are only in their infancy.

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